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# Embrace The Suck

Tyler Nicholson

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# EMBRACE THE SUCK

by

TYLER LEIGH NICHOLSON

Under the Direction of Christina A. West, MFA

## ABSTRACT

*Embrace the Suck* is an important and widely experienced military colloquialism. The phrase is based on the undeniable fact that life is about to become very difficult and the only option is to embrace all that is horrible. I reimagine childhood toys, playing at war and subvert the monumental. Common heroic exploits are restructured into moments between action, the hurry up and wait, the busy work, the catharsis through self-destruction. Based on my personal experiences in the US Army and an arsenal of information and stories from fellow soldiers, I become a native informant.

INDEX WORDS: Ceramics, War Art, Soldier, Figure Sculpting, Toy, Memorial, Mythology

EMBRACE THE SUCK

by

TYLER LEIGH NICHOLSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2016

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2016

EMBRACE THE SUCK

by

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis, my education, and journey to my son, Rowdy Jones Nicholson.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The most accurate list of acknowledgements can in no way fit this page; there have been so many people who have helped shape my life and education that mere words cannot express my genuine gratitude. For those I have failed to mention, my thanks to you. I must first begin by thanking and acknowledging my mother, Marsi Howell, without her dedication to her children and passion for cultural enrichment, I would have never left my hometown. To my brothers-in-arms, that kept me safe and mostly sane during our year in combat, SGT. Zach Alexander and SGT. Tom Sawyer; I will never hear, *On the Road Again*, by Willy Nelson without thinking of crossing the wire into Baghdad with you fine gentlemen.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

*What makes the green grass grow? BLOOD, Blood makes the green grass grow, Drill Sergeant!*  
- *US Army Call and Response*<sup>1</sup>

My fascination with depictions of the heroic soldier in monuments and children's toys springs from my experience as a Noncommissioned Officer in the US Army and my involvement in Operation Iraq Freedom II. No amount of Army propaganda, pseudo-historical cinematic epics, or GI Joe cartoons could prepare me for what I experienced living the day-to-day life as a soldier in garrison and as security escort Humvee Gunner in Iraq. While pop culture and propaganda outlets make the enlistee ready for the possibility of violence, one is not prepped for the lesser-known and somewhat addicting attributes that only danger and violence can bring: moments of absolute clarity and focus, invincibility. I reimagine childhood toys and playing at war, explore memory through materiality, and subvert the monumental—the typical heroic exploits restructured into moments between actions, the hurry up and wait, the busy work, the catharsis self-destructive or unprofessional behavior. In short, I disrupt the traditional media fueled notions of military might.

Discarded and aged materials used throughout the exhibition recreate the craftsmanship of the so-called up-armored vehicles and equipment that stand in sharp contrast to what one expects from a heavily funded military, but to which many soldiers in the Iraq war did not have access. Instead, operations were conducted in Combat vehicles made with scavenged wood and steel creating a ready-made coffin and the illusion of safety, instead of the up-armored vehicles necessary to mitigate the loss of allied forces.

The figures in the exhibition are the anti-monument to the conventional perception of military life. My intention is not to critique the individual soldier but to draw awareness of

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<sup>1</sup> US Army Cadence – no author, variations exist military-wide

unnecessary sacrifice and challenge the viewer's understanding of war, its place in the home as an outlet for entertainment, and its psychological impact the active participants.

War is bought, sold and peddled like tickets to a movie. The public is encouraged to accept war by thinking of it as a moral high ground against an antagonist, or evil-doer, and zeroing in on the opponents' acts of injustice. Support for any war is garnered by identifying the protagonist, a relatable young person of middle-class background who will be martyred to protect the freedoms we so casually enjoy. Conflict is brought into the home through news coverage, works of fiction, rehashing/reinventing a prouder time when we, the American people and our government, were noble and true defenders of freedom. An effective method of instilling a penchant for all things war is to overwhelm a society with half-truths, heroics, victimizations, and generalizations. If repeated long and loud enough, the idea will begin to see fruition.

From the shelves of toy stores, bookstores, and the depths of video games to the nightly news desk, there is no shortage of depictions of violence and fictionalized acts of heroism related to war. This subtle (or not so) form of propaganda helps to affirm that it is fun to destroy one's enemy, as long as that enemy is villainous and a detriment to civilized society. It is not only with works of fiction that we remove ourselves from war's reality. Subtle changes of adjectives when talking about conflict act as a personal lubricant to aid in acceptance of drawbacks associated with full-scale conflict: fallen instead of war dead, neutralize instead of conquering, targeted killing instead of assassination. The entertainment industry can only sell a war, in particular, a war without a clear objective or reasoning, if it is perceived as sterile, a population meant to feel victimized, conquest is guaranteed, casualties minimal (on our side), and our enemy

as inhuman. The removal of the atrocities and the injection of sentimentality for the soldier removes the citizen from moral culpability.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Stahl, Roger. *Militainment, Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2010

## 2 INFLUENCES AND DRIVE

*“You have to see everything yourself, or else it doesn’t count. I’m a realist! I have to see everything. I have to experience the highs and the lows for myself, that’s why I went to war, that’s why I volunteered.”*  
*-Otto Dix<sup>3</sup>*

I am influenced by the psychological complexity of combat and the interpretations from those who have experienced war first-hand. Often artwork about war is one-noted, hollow, and following the trope of war is bad. Makers who have experienced the unnatural (or natural) state of hostilities provide a much more vivid and honest insight and tend to be less direct in their critiques, if any exist, and operate in a much more abstract manner. Three artists have been particularly influential in my development as an artist. Their experiences fall on two opposite sides of a conflict: warfighters and refugee.

Otto Dix has long been one of my personal favorites, chiefly due to his multifaceted depictions of trench warfare during WWI and the effects on the psyche. The first image I saw from Dix’s *Der Krieg* (The War) series, *Shock troops advance under gas* (Fig 1), captured the energy of battle and the overwhelming possibility of death in a way I had not seen before in art. Many images from *The War* walk a line between glorification and critique, violence and beauty and while the graphic horrors of battle are evident in the War series, it is Dix’s ambiguous outlook that is truly engaging. Dix has admitted to wanting to experience the war first hand, to suffer, and through his work, he has shown his addiction and repulsion to combat (Fig 2) and on the other hand, has expressed his troubles for years after the war ended.

Where Dix shows the gruesome and beautiful realities of combat, Ehren Tool takes a more meditative approach to making work about conflict. Tool makes cups on the potter’s wheel

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<sup>3</sup> *Otto Dix: Postcards from the Front* [Video file]. (1992). United Kingdom: Arena & BBC Four. Retrieved April 4, 2016, from <https://youtu.be/dHmzSytD1Pk>

and decorates the vessels with a myriad of military themed and violent images, such as: photographic images of soldiers, military toys, weaponry, and memorials. The cups are individual snippets of chaos, and when shown together in large groups, can be incredibly overwhelming. Tool has stated that, "...I believe the cup is the appropriate scale to talk about war. The cups go into the world hand-to-hand, one story at a time."<sup>4</sup>

When displayed as a large group, Tool's cups become more like a company or battalion of soldiers than just a collection of vessels. The repetition of making and presenting the cups in a show of uniformity references the structured lives of soldiers. When seen from a distance they appear alike in shape and function but upon closer inspection, each cup is an individual, different from every other. Tool's experience as a Marine helps him to talk about the military with a higher degree of authenticity than the civilian would be able and it is that truthfulness in his work I find most compelling.

War creates death as well as misplaced peoples. The byproduct of a war-torn society is the refugee, those who want to flee the chaos that has befallen their reality. In America, we have large pockets of refugees from every corner of the world and unfortunately, our nation has a history of subjugation against citizens from countries of which we are belligerent. During WWII we had Japanese internment camps, today we have a large percentage of the American population that distrust an entire group of people due to their religious identity (sound familiar?)

Iraq-born artist, Wafaa Bilal, escaped Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime in the early 1990's and sought asylum in the US. His work is based on the experience of fleeing his homeland. He laments *existing simultaneously in two worlds – his home in the 'comfort zone' of*

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<sup>4</sup> Grattan, N. (2011, October 1). Ehren Tool. Retrieved April 15, 2016, from <http://inthemake.com/ehren-tool/>

*the U.S. and his consciousness of the 'conflict zone in Iraq'*<sup>5</sup> and being subjected to oppression in both Iraq and the U.S.

In his performance/ installation piece entitled, *Domestic Tension*, Bilal sequestered himself in a gallery room for a month and set up a webcam attached to a paintball gun that could be controlled and fired by viewers that would visit his website. With this performance, he gave the audience the opportunity to simulate the experience of modern warfare, more specifically the technology that enables the military to fire remotely, missiles from a drone in Iraq without ever setting foot on the battlefield. Over the 4 weeks, he was locked in the gallery and approximately 60,000 paintballs were fired at Bilal from viewers in 128 different countries.<sup>6</sup>

Detachment from the effects of war is the most striking feature of *Domestic Tension*, as Bilal said, "To the Western media it's a virtual war going on in Iraq -- we're far removed in the comfort zone. We're allowed to disengage from the consequences of war. We don't see mutilated bodies, we don't see the toll on human beings." The lack of consequence for the general public is the most disturbing and provoking; the paintball gun shooters are removed physically from the gallery so the lines of reality are blurred.

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<sup>5</sup> Bilal, W. (2016). Biography. Retrieved April 16, 2016, from <http://wafaabilal.com/>

<sup>6</sup> Bilal, W. (2016). Biography. Retrieved April 16, 2016, from <http://wafaabilal.com/>

### 3 IMAGES



**Figure 1 Dix, Otto, Shock Troops Advance under Gas: “The War”**

1924. Etching, aquatint, plate: 7 5/8 x 11 5/16", sheet: 13 11/16 x 18 5/8", Berlin State Museums Collection



**Figure 2 Dix, Otto, Dance of Death 1917 (Dead Man Heights) “The War”**

1924. Etching, aquatint, and drypoint plate: 9 5/8 x 11 5/8" sheet: 13 11/16 x 18 3/8", Berlin State Museums Collection





**Figure 3 Bilal, Wafaa. Domestic Tension (Shoot an Iraqi)**  
2007. Flatfile galleries, Chicago, Illinois. Paintball gun, paintballs, webcam, household items



**Figure 4 Tool, Ehren Ehren Tool: *Production or Destruction***  
2012. Courtesy the Craft and Folk Art Museum. Photo: Noel Bass



**Figure 5** Tool, Ehren. *Ehren Tool: Production or Destruction* (installation view)  
2012. Courtesy the Craft and Folk Art Museum. Photo: Noel Bass



**Figure 6** Nicholson, Tyler. *Teaset of the Willing: Apathy*





**Figure 7** Nicholson, Tyler. *Teaset of the Willing: Smoke em' While You Got em'*  
2014. 21x10x8", Earthenware, underglaze, wash, glaze



**Figure 8** *Pissin' Contest* (Series)  
2016



**Figure 9** *Pissin' Contest #1*  
2016. 70x24x18". Ceramic, wood, steel, 550 cord  
underglaze, wash



**Figure 10** *Pissin' Contest #2*

2016. 71x25x13" Ceramic, wood, steel, underglaze  
Wash, 550 cord



**Figure 11** *Pissin' Contest #3*

2016. 71x25x13" Ceramic, wood, steel,  
underglaze, wash, tie-down



**Figure 12** *Drill and Ceremony (Dog and Pony Show)*  
*Left, Face!* 2016. 80x32x36". Wood, steel, porcelain, 550 cord  
 TV, Video (looping), extension cord, 100mph tape



**Figure 13** *Drill and Ceremony (Dog and Pony Show)*  
*About, Face!* 2016. 78x30x36". Wood, steel, porcelain,  
 550 cord, TV, video (looping), US Army Boots, ext. cord,  
 100mph tape





**Figure 14** *Drill and Ceremony (Dog and Pony Show)*  
*Right, Face!* 2016. 78x40x36" Wood, steel, porcelain, TV  
 Video (looping), extension cord, 100mph tape



**Figure 15** *Embrace The Suck (Gallery installation)*  
 2016

## 4 EARLY WORK

*“Front Towards Enemy”  
-Instruction printed on front of the M18A1 Claymore, Anti-Personnel Mine*

It is important to discuss the evolution of my earlier makings and how they influenced the most recent body of work. Two pieces made early on stand out as the works that began the transition to my thesis work—both formally and conceptually. They are examples of my want to present the deterioration of material and the loss of self. While these pieces are important in the timeline of my work and successful, they lack in relatability to the viewer—war is a subject few experience and being a convoy gunner drives a wedge that furthers the distance between relatability and the incomprehensible.

In the series, *Tea Set of the Willing*, I created a sculptural tea set that is more figurative than utilitarian. A teapot, creamer, and platter topped with harlequin-like figures that are a reference to the silly, but the tragic soldier. Soldiers are notoriously foolish when given no task and act out to pass the time—joking around with each other, continuously smoking cigarettes, and waiting. They sit in their trucks (teapots) and ride along like ducks at a shooting gallery, waiting to be atomized by an IED or to make it home, neither outcome is guaranteed. In addition to apathy, the ceramic soldiers are incapable of helping themselves due to their lack of appendages. The missing limbs do not represent physical injury instead they are projections of mental loss, the loss of innocence and humanity. Overall, they represent a very sad lot.

Hardship is represented in the expressions of the figures and the state of their equipment: hastily assembled, mismatched, bordering on ancient and landing squarely on ridiculous; a bucket for one’s helmet (Fig 7) and a siphon for another’s (fig 6). Decay is prevalent not only to show the state of equipment but also mental deterioration that happens towards the end of a deployment, where every trip outside the wire (going on a mission) is essentially like rolling the

dice in an extremely high stakes bet or being blindly led to one's execution. The mental loss is not meant to show a lacking in facilities but a declining concern of self-preservation. Like when my buddies and I would say when we were doing something destructive, "What are they going to do, send us to Iraq?" A phrase that thinly justifies any unhealthy behavior.

While meaningful, these pieces can be viewed as being extremely negative and casting too broad a shadow on the viewer. If one has not been exposed to the repeated threat of personal destruction, then the work becomes too much about combat, and the psychological weight of the work overpowers the silly-soldiers previously mentioned and distances itself from the viewer. Moreover, *Tea Set of the Willing* were too focused on personal experiences and feelings rather than the broader narrative I was attempting to convey. However, they were a steppingstone to creating work that is approachable by a wider audience.



## 5 Prowess

*Do you wanna' be an Airborne Ranger, live the life of blood and danger? Why should I jump from a plane,  
when I can shoot a rocket downrange!<sup>7</sup>*

*-US Army running cadence*

In the series of sculptures, *Pissin' Contest* (Fig. 8), a series of three ceramic male figures are posed upon structures made from an assortment of wood and materials. The figures are fragmented, omitting the head and shoulder area. In place of the head and shoulders are targets that suggest a point of aim. Each sculpture is unique in surface treatment and construction; while the figures vary in scale, the overall height of the figure and watchtower for each set is roughly eye-level. The sculptures emphasize the ridiculous and boisterous activities unique to the universal male soldier, demonstrating a juvenile measure of male prowess; who can spray urine the farthest...not unlike animals in the wild. The figures are constructed in a way that obfuscates their identity, but a degree of individuality is retained through their surface treatments, scale, and gesture. While they all differ in color, they still fall in the realm of camouflage and are parts of the same fabric.

The gesture of *Pissin' Contest #1* (Fig. 9) suggests an air of authority and self-confidence, even while being less physically endowed than his compatriots (another fabrication of measured masculinity). The feet are firmly planted more than shoulder width apart, a hand is lightly resting on the hip bone, and there is a slight arching of the spine. The segmentation of the upper torso is a horizontal line where the figure ends and the target above, a large cinderblock-like rectangle, is positioned and suggests the top part of the body. While its pose offers itself a high degree of confidence, the hand aiming the penis is firmly, almost aggressively grabbing the penis. Whether the action is to help lengthen or help with distance is left for the viewer to decide.

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<sup>7</sup> US Army running cadence

The scale of *Pissin Contest #3* is slightly larger than #1 and #2. What #3 gains in both height and penis size, the figure fails in confidence. He struggles to gain distance and is precariously balanced with a noticeable arch in the back and possibly using every trick in the book of pissing contests to make up for his lack (perceived or not) of virility. The surface treatment, like #1 and #2, is meant to mimic a newness, or youthfulness and contrast the quickly assembled, ramshackle platform (guard tower.)

The guard towers were created specifically using found wood and material. By intentionally relying only on found building materials, the guard towers more accurately reference the state of US Army vehicles in the early years of the Iraq war. The practice of scavenging for armor was commonplace.

My personal experience resulted in approximately 12 months of escort missions in vehicles that resembled something akin to Frankenstein. They would break down or had the engine power of a toddler on a tricycle, rather than the half-trillion dollar budget the US Armed forces was operating on in 2004. Orders were passed down from the chain of command to use wood, sandbags, and scrap metal to make whatever changes necessary to up-armor the trucks. What resulted was a mismatch of material and adaptations, no two trucks were alike and were more akin to a vehicle found on the side of a road in a post-apocalyptic movie instead of the uniformity and perceived toughness of military equipment.

My compatriots and I were obliged to conduct missions where encountering a roadside bomb, or IED would almost certainly result in us transforming from handsome-ish twenty-somethings to unrecognizable lumps of meat. The irony of our situation was not lost on us; our trucks were referred to as the door-less wonder and coffin or that piece of shit.

The targets are representative of the looming threat of destruction. While it is correct to assume that the modern US serviceman's quality of life, by and large, is better than soldier's from conflicts past, the probability of dying is still very real and very high. This creeping doom follows soldiers everywhere, not only outside the perimeter of the FOB (Forward Operating Base) or outside the wire, but when they lay down to sleep, or step outside a tent or building to smoke a cigarette, or even walking to the latrine. Every distant *popping* noise within a few seconds could turn into an incoming rocket or mortar fire, every piece of trash on the road a possible IED, every rooftop or alley a hiding spot for snipers, every neighborhood a possible ambush point.

## 6 Absurdity

*“Many Army customs compliment procedures required by military courtesy, while others add to the graciousness of garrison life. The breach of some Army customs merely brands the offender as ignorant, careless, or ill bred. Violations of other Army customs, however, will bring official censure or disciplinary action...”*

*-US Army Field Manual, FM-7-21.13, Chapter 4, Section 4.3, Customs<sup>8</sup>*

An incredible amount of time and effort is dedicated to training a soldier in the professional discipline of drill and ceremony. These step and formational guidelines are rooted from the inception of the US Army in 1777 and helped to install control and uniformity of thought and movement to an otherwise chaotic militia. The historical importance of tradition and the movement of a large group as one is still instrumental in military life—every morning, formation, afternoon, ceremony or formal grouping of soldiers, drill and ceremony are first and foremost.

Aside from cohesive movement of multiple individuals, drill and ceremony are instrumental in the establishment of esprit de corps or the spirit of the corps. One does not desire to fall out of sync and destroy the equilibrium amongst the group. Any displayed lack of discipline brings dishonor upon the individual and in turn, brings the rest of the unit down; in a training environment being out of sync results in punishment of the individual and his unit. From the soldier’s first day and until their last in the military, drill and ceremony is an everyday occurrence, more prevalent than combative training or even weapons qualification. The exact movements and honors rendered are the foundations of being a professional, and one is expected to be that at all times, on duty and off.

The weight of professionalism looms over a soldier’s every movement, thought or action. Anything outside the realms of disciplined military behavior is grounds for disciplinary action; however this is rarely the case amongst a barracks full of young men or young women. Soldiers

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Defense. (2015). *The Soldier's Guide* (FM 7-21.13). Retrieved from Headquarters, Department of the Army website: <https://www.aclu.org/files/projects/foiasearch/pdf/DODDOA011286.pdf>

will and have always found ways to skirt the yolk of professionalism to help deal with the pressures of life or mission. However, for the most part they attempt to follow the basics of trained behavior, the very least to avoid getting in trouble. However, in times of conflict and overwhelming stress, the garrison fueled rules of behavior grow in number and become harder to abide.

*Drill and Ceremony (Dog and Pony Show)*(Fig. 17) is a series of three separate videos and corresponding sculptures that address a time and place that relate to the *Pissin' Contest* series. Each video depicts a pair of boots worn by a person, conducting military facing movements on top of a 1" slab of unfired porcelain, stationed upon a platform. The platforms and videos reference the abstracted human body and also serve a memorial function.

The videos are playing on a continuous loop on televisions through a DVD player and each television has a dedicated video specific to the location of the TV and sculpture; the mid 2000's. Looking at the group from the front the first video/sculpture on the left is entitled, *Drill and Ceremony (Dog and Pony Show) Left, Face!* (Fig. 14), the middle, *About, Face!* (Fig. 15), and the right, naturally, is *Right, Face!* (Fig. 16). The facing movements are important as they are the only ways to change direction according to the rules of drill and ceremony. However, a command of left, right or about face, given enough times, will bring the individual back to their starting position.

To perform these movements to standard requires the individual to be on a stable surface and the wet porcelain underfoot makes this movement awkward and more difficult the more it is attempted on the wet clay. The struggle is a metaphoric reference of attempting adherence to the strict guidelines of professionalism, in particular the more garrisoned ideas of soldiering, in an environment where showmanship is unnecessary. A specific example of this is when returning to base from an all day mission in Baghdad, Iraq, I was personally stopped and admonished by an

Army Officer of fairly high rank. The reason for my dressing down: my uniform was in a state that was not in accordance of army regulations. Translation, I looked like a soup sandwich.

This struck me as incredibly petty and uninformed on the Officer's part as I had just returned from almost 8 hours of sticking out of the roof of a Humvee, exposed to smoke, dust, possible sniper fire and IED's at every corner. Not to mention that it was the summer months so the air temperature was in the neighborhood of 125° F and I was wearing roughly 40 to 50lbs of personal armor and ammunition which made the temperature closer to 140° F. During my ass-chewing the caveats of unprofessional appearance would lead to unprofessional behavior and I am a representative of America and the United States Army to the local nationals. My memory has faded a bit, but I can guarantee that local Iraqi motorists were not concerned with how sweaty or wrinkled my uniform was, but hoping not to get run over by the 10,000lb Humvee or shot by the yelling man-child with a cigarette in his mouth.

As a soldier, everyone of higher rank is superior, thus can give one a hard time. These ridiculous situations are commonplace in all aspects of military life. For every superior who understand the struggle of soldiering and the folly of certain procedures and protocols, there are 10 others looking to satisfy their need to remind a soldier where they stand. In a combat zone, under constant stress from being worked to hysteria and the possibility of mortal peril; continuing to cater to garrison begins to erode what little *esprit de corps* remains.

The porcelain slabs reference the quagmire of being stuck in a situation of difficulty and being forced to perform mundane tasks or movements to satisfy the powers that be. Additionally, I see the marks left by the boot prints and facing movements as a sort of thumb print of the individual's struggle to maintain an air of professionalism in a ridiculous situation. The clay is left

unfired so that, as time moves forward, the clay further breaks down and changes in the same way that memory changes over time.

It has been 10 years since I have formally conducted any drill and ceremony, however my body still knows the movements and is able to recreate them without issue. However, the memory of events change over time, some things remain clear and ever present, while others begin to crack and deteriorate. A material property specific to clay is called, memory. This is the physical characteristic for the clay to return to a previous manipulated state after it has been fired or as it is drying. The facing movements conducted on the slab of porcelain is an example of placing a memory into the material, the clay holds its shape and is a record of what has transpired; in the same way a monument uses heroic symbolism to reference events past.

## 7 Conclusion

*“The truths are contradictory. It can be argued, for instance, that war is grotesque. But in truth war is also beauty. For all its horror, you can't help but gape at the awful majesty of combat.”*

*- Tim O'Brien, The Things They Carried<sup>9</sup>*

The focus of my critique is not directed towards the individual soldier or even the function of the military as an institute of force and protection. The existence of the military is an unfortunate necessity and few people deserve more respect and admiration than the active service member. The saying goes, *once a soldier, always a soldier*, and regardless of the widening gap between my experience and my now; I still hold allegiance to my comrades. Regardless of their reason, these people willingly put themselves at the disposal, for good or ill, of the people and the US Government.

My criticism is directed to the media fueled mythology that was is what you must do to have a voice in this country, to be strong, that it is an adventure, that it is anything than what it is: the absolute worst of humanity. The blending of military and entertainment or, entertainment with military themes in which the Department of Defense is celebrated is best described as, *militalainment*.<sup>10</sup> I think the more appropriate definition is by Dr. Roger Stahl in his book, *Militalainment Inc.* as, *state violence translated into an object of pleasurable consumption*.<sup>11</sup>

It is my intent, for the viewer to consider their understandings of violence themed materials that they have experienced as children or what they see on T.V. While my thesis is entitled, *Embrace The Suck* and the phrase is about acquiescence, the perception that one cannot

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<sup>9</sup> O'Brien, T. (1990). *The Things They Carried* [The Things They Carried (Excerpts)]. New York, NY: Penguin. Retrieved March 2, 2016, from [http://pages.uoregon.edu/eherman/teaching/texts/O'Brien\\_TheThingsTheyCarried.pdf](http://pages.uoregon.edu/eherman/teaching/texts/O'Brien_TheThingsTheyCarried.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> WordNet Search - 3.1. (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2016, from <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=militalainment>

<sup>11</sup> Stahl, R. (2010). *Militalainment, Inc. : war, media, and popular culture*. New York : Routledge, 2010.



change their situation. While it is a statement of being stalwart in the face of adversity, I feel it is an easy answer to complex situations and one that should not always be relied upon. My hope is that the viewer take a less passive approach to contention, and instead of always embracing what is perceived as the only answer; find a new solution to whatever situation may arise.

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